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The Departed Souls

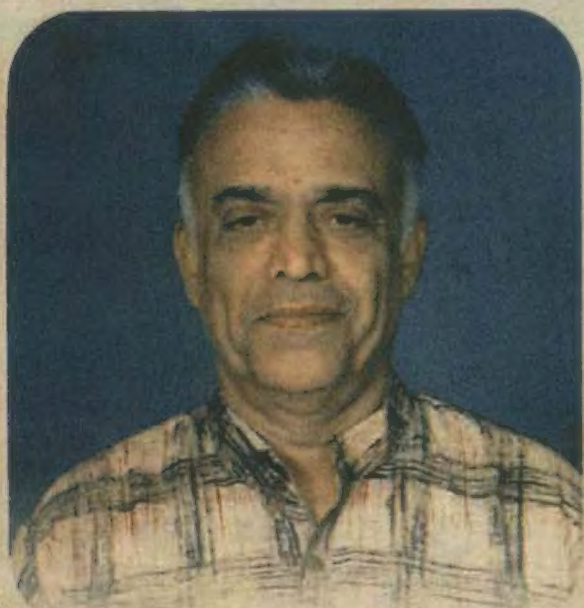


The Torch Bearer of Laya
Bangalore K. Venkataram

84



Grand Old Man of Karnatak Music
Dr. Semmangudi R. Srinivasa Iyer



Felicitations To Mridangist
M. VASUDEVA RAO
On His 60th Birthday

ಇದು ನಿಮಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತೆ ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿಯ ಅಗಾಧತೆ
ಸಶಕ್ತ ಸ್ವಾವಲಂಬಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಂಘಟನೆಗೆ ರುವಾರಿ
ಹೌದು! ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಈ ಕ್ರಾಂತಿಕಾರಿ ಯೋಜನೆ ಇಡೀ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಬಹು ದೊಡ್ಡ ಮಾದರಿ.
ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಲ್ಲಿ ಆತ್ಮ ವಿಶ್ವಾಸ, ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಸ್ಥಿರತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಆದಾಯ ತರುವ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳಿಗೆ ನಾಂದಿ ಹಾಡುವ ಈ
ಯೋಜನೆಯು ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಸರ್ವಾಂಗೀಣ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಸಾಧಿಸುತ್ತಾ ಸರ್ವಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿದೆ.

- ◆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಾದ್ಯಂತ 11.0 ಲಕ್ಷ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರನ್ನೊಳಗೊಂಡ 75,660 ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪುಗಳು ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರತ.
70,007 ಗುಂಪುಗಳು ಬ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಖಾತೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪಡೆದು ೭೯.೨೪ ಕೋಟಿಗಳ ರೂಪಾಯಿಗಳ ಉಳಿತಾಯ ಸಾಧನೆ.
- ◆ ಜನರ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಹಭಾಗಿತ್ವದಿಂದಾಗಿ, ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪುಗಳು ಸಮಾಜದ ಸರ್ವತೋಮುಖ
ಅಭ್ಯುದಯಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಹಲವಾರು ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಡುಗೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ.
- ◆ ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ರಚನೆಯಾಗಿರುವ ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪುಗಳನ್ನು ಬಲಪಡಿಸುವದಕ್ಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಒತ್ತನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ.

ಯೋಜನೆಯ ರೂಪರೇಶಿಗಳು:

- ◆ ಬಡತನ ರೇಖೆಯ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಬದುಕುತ್ತಿರುವ, ಸಮಾನ ಮನಸ್ಸು 15-20 ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಸೇರಿ ತಮ್ಮ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಗಾಗಿ
ಸ್ವಇಚ್ಛೆಯಿಂದ ರಚಿಸಿಕೊಂಡ ಗುಂಪೇ---ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪು.
- ◆ ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕಿನ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂಗನವಾಡಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕರ್ತೆಯರ ಮೂಲಕ ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ
ಗುಂಪುಗಳ ರಚನೆ.

ಅರ್ಹತೆ:

- ◆ ಬಡತನ ರೇಖೆಗಿಂತ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಬದುಕುತ್ತಿರುವ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ.
- ◆ ಭೂರಹಿತ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಕೃಷಿ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರು, ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ ಅಥವಾ ವರ್ಗಕ್ಕೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಕುಟುಂಬದವರು, ಕುಡಿತಕ್ಕೆ
ಬಲಿಯಾದ ಅಥವಾ ಅಂಗವಿಕಲ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಇರುವ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಆದ್ಯತೆ.
- ◆ ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪುಗಳು ತಮ್ಮ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂಗನವಾಡಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕರ್ತೆಯರು
ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶನ ನೀಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. ನಂತರ ಮೇಲುಸ್ತುವಾರಿಯನ್ನು ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪುಗಳೇ ನೋಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವವು.

ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಧೈಯೋದ್ದೇಶ:

- ◆ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ 176 ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕುಗಳಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಲಕ್ಷ ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪುಗಳ
ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಸುಮಾರು 20 ಲಕ್ಷ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಸಂಘಟನೆ.
- ◆ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಪ್ರಗತಿಯ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗೆ ಸೂಕ್ತ ವಾತಾವರಣವನ್ನು ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುವುದು.
- ◆ ಆದಾಯೋತ್ಪನ್ನ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರನ್ನು ತೊಡಗಿಸುವುದರ ಮೂಲಕ ಬಡತನ ರೇಖೆಯ ಕೆಳಗೆ
ಬದುಕುತ್ತಿರುವ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಆದಾಯವನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿ, ಅವರಲ್ಲಿ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಸ್ಥಿರತೆಯನ್ನು ಮೂಡಿಸುವುದು. ತನ್ಮೂಲಕ
ಸ್ವಾವಲಂಬಿಗಳನ್ನಾಗಿ ಮಾಡುವುದು.
- ◆ ವಿವಿಧ ಇಲಾಖೆಗಳನ್ನು ಒಮ್ಮುಖಗೊಳಿಸುವುದರ ಮೂಲಕ ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪುಗಳಿಗೆ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳ ಫಲ
ದೊರೆಯುವಂತೆ ಅವಕಾಶ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುವುದು ಹಾಗೂ ಸಾಲ ನೀಡುವಂತಹ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಾಮೀಪ್ಯ ಒದಗಿಸುವುದು.

ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ --ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಸದುಪಯೋಗ ಪಡೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಿ!

ನೀವಿನ್ನೂ ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಯೋಜನೆಗೆ ಸೇರಿಲ್ಲವೇ? ಇಂದೇ ಸೇರಿ. ಸ್ವ-ಸಹಾಯ ಗುಂಪಿನ ಸದಸ್ಯರಾಗಿ.

ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ --ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಸರ್ವತೋಮುಖ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಯ ತಾರಕ ಮಂತ್ರ..



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Relevance Of Deepavali In Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Life

By Harini Raghavan

Very rarely a phenomenon takes place in the world that will have a far-reaching effect in changing the history of the world. In the world of Karnatak Music the advent of Shyama Shastri, Thyagaraja and Muthuswamy Dikshitar changed the course and perception of music. The threesome was reverentially called the trinity of Karnatak Music. Their pioneering work was such that, after their time Karnatic Music was never the same again.

Muthuswamy Dikshitar is one of the greatest boons that God gave to humanity. He was such a rare being, noble soul, who left behind a legacy which is eternal. His works are of grandeur and depth, both in melody and poesy.

Dikshitar was born in 1775 to a scholar musician, Ramaswamy dikshitar. Under his father's guidance, at a very young age he studied the Vedas and Sanskrit and mastered both theory and practice in music, and learned to play Vina. Very soon he blossomed not only as a vocalist but also as a competent Vina player.

He accompanied Sri Chidambaranatha Yogi to Kasi and served him there with all sincerity. While with him, he learnt Yoga, Vedanta, maditation and various spiritual and religious matters. His exposure to Hindustani music at Kasi enabled him to imbibe its essential features, which is evident in some of his compositions.

On his return from Kashi, he took to composing. His first composition was "Sri Nathadi Guruguho" in Mayamalavagaula Raga - a tribute to his guru Sri Chidambaranatha Yogi. Amongst the various group compositions on different deities "Guru Vibhakthi Kritis" are said to be his first set of compositions. His other group composi-

tions include: 1. Abhayanba Vibhakti Kritis. 2. Thyagaraja Vbhakti Kritis. 3. Kamalamba Navavarana Kritis. 4. Neelo- tpalamba Kritis. 5. The Navagraha Kritis. 6. Pancha Bhuta linga Kritis.

Dikshitar chose Sanskrit as the medium for his compositions. This was most appropriate to the nature of his work, which was to describe temples, the deities and their attributes, to explain tantric and yogic principles, besides _expression of profound philosophy. He followed 'Yati' and 'Prasa' regulations in his compositions and negotiated the Sahitya according to the necessities of music. The magnitude of his knowledge, depth of his genius and great poetic abilities are reflected clearly in his compositions.

Dikshitar composed a complete series of songs to illustrate the 72-mela scheme of "Asampoorna Mela Paddhati".

He was 60 years old, when he knew that his end was near. He was fully satisfied with accomplishment of his life's mission. He had bequeathed to the world his immortal music, eternal works of Bhakti and Vedanta. It was time for him to leave.

On 21st October 1835 it was Deepavali, Naraka-Chaturdasi day - a day of lights, when the darkness of ignorance is dispelled and the lamp of true knowledge shines. Dikshitar got up very early in the morning and as per the tradition had a ritual bath. At that time he had a vision of Sri Kasi Annapurneshwari for a short while. He knew that she had come to give him moksha. After the bath and pooja, he sang "Ehi annapurne" in raga Punnagavarali. Then the Rajah of Ettayapuram came running to Dikshitar's house. He was deeply

(Continued on page 6)



Disciplined organisation

Even the best of artistes cannot be a big draw if he or she performs in the same city after every two weeks or even two months. Little do our organisers realise that Karnatak music at its best is an art of leisure for the artiste and the audience alike and leisure is a major casualty in the hectic life of a big city of vastness and distances. Performance of Indian music is different from the cinema or theatre—where a movie or a play can be screened or staged for months and yet be a big draw. Therefore, to achieve the best result, to give the best encouragement to artistes and to provide the best of treats to the audience, concerts have to be fewer than they are today with a judicious choice of performers.

One never had such a feeling of disgust, even dismay, as during the past few years. One has also noticed other changes—mostly unwelcome changes—in what may be termed the concert culture of today. It is more of a society get-together. It is more of a status symbol for people who don't know music but want to be seen in an important concert (it was intriguing to hear requests for morning ragas at an evening concert in a recently held Hindusthani recital!). It is often an opportunity for the organisers to be in touch with VIPs. And more importantly with a few exceptions, they begin their programmes from half an hour to an hour later than the scheduled time.

In the end, these modern concerts are reduced to old time *mehfils* of *Maharajas*—or '*mujras*' of yesteryears! There should be some difference between chamber music in private drawing rooms and the music of concert halls. *Maharajas* and '*raisas*' had all the time and leisure at their disposal. Do we have these? Or, are we trying to put the clock back?

The concert organisers need to coordinate their activities, especially in the matter of dates and selection of artistes. They must strictly observe punctuality and make the artistes do the same. It is true, the best of classical music implies leisure and proper mood. One may argue with force that our classical music is not meant for people who do not have the time to listen to it; that, in the ultimate analysis, classical music is not meant for the indiscriminating multitude. But, when the last word has been said on the subject along these lines, the fact remains that one has to take hard realities into consideration as far as public concerts are concerned. A happy blending of the Maharaja's *mehfil* and modern discipline and decorum is possible—provided the organisers themselves are a discipline lot.

-----Karnataka Kala Sri Dr. M. Surya Prasad.

(Continued from page 4)

perturbed. The royal elephant Gangeya got wild, broke loose, marched on to cremation ground and stayed on without allowing anybody to go near him. This indicated something inauspicious and trouble to the Rajah. The king asked Dikshitar whether this portrayed any danger to him or the kingdom. Dikshitar, assuring him that no danger would befall the king or his kingdom, blessed him and sent him back.

Later, after an elaborate pooja, Dikshitar played some of his own compositions on the Vina and then asked his disciples to sing his masterpiece in Raga Gamakakriya – Meenakshi Me Mudam Dehi. While they were singing the anupallavi - 'meena lochani pasha mochani...' he asked them to repeat it. While they were singing the said lines again, he breathed his last. At this

instant death the disciples were dumbstruck.

The Rajah rushed back to Dikshitar's house on hearing the sad news, lamenting that he had not understood the import of the prophetic words of the master. This was the greatest tragedy that could befall his kingdom. On the order of the Rajah the body of Dikshitar was cremated at a specially selected place and a samadhi was erected there. It has now become a place of pilgrimage for all lovers of art and religion.

Now what remains of the physical legacy of Muthuswamy Dikshitar are his samadhi at Ettayapuram, his pooja deities, The SriChakra Meru, the vina and the manuscripts of his compositions. The Jayanthi and Aradhana of Muthuswamy Dikshitar are commemorated in Ettayapuram and regular poojas are conducted at his samdhi everyday. ♦

M.A.Narasimhachar Music Foundation (R.)

2nd Annual Music Festival

Venue: Bangalore Gayana Samaja, Bangalore

Friday, 14-11-2003, at 5.30 p.m. Conferring the title of 'Gana Varidhi' on M.S.Sheela

Vocal recital by M.S.Sheela accompanied by Jyotsna Srikanth (violin), Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (mridanga), M.A. Krishnamurthy (ghata), Guruprasanna (khanjari).

Saturday, 15-11-2003 at 5.30 p.m.

Flute recital by Dr.N.Ramani accompanied by H.K.Venkataram (violin), Palghat Raghu (mridanga), Abhishek Raghuram (khanjari).

Sunday, 16-11-2003 at 5.30 p.m.

Vocal recital by Vid.T.M.Krishna accompanied by Vid.S.Varadarajan (violin), H.S.Sudheendra (mridanga), G.S.Ramanujam (ghata)

All are cordially invited.



Dr.A.H.Rama Rao & Sudha Rao page

REVIEWS

Admirable Archana Sastry

Tall and well built young Archana Sastry held high her Guru Radha Sridhar's pride and glory as an accomplished teacher. Her Bharatanatya at Nayana auditorium in the EWCEP series was marked by a plethora of sthaanakaas and fine footwork. Her arm movements were well graduated beyond the "that-thai-thaha" stage and the resultant aridhis going the full circle. Archana's large eyes added spice to her abhinaya. Dikshitar's Gowla krithi "Sri Mahaganapathe ravatumam" is musically demanding. And to visualise it, one should be equipped with extraordinary skill. Archana demonstrated this skill and the attributes of Lord Ganapathi had an artistic exposition. The pauses between one movement and another used to be apt.

The Khamach varna on Lord Brihadeeshwara "Swamini rammanave" spanned all aspects of dance.

It lent beautifully to comprehend the physical expertise of nritta as well as the subtle shades of facial expression. In the alternating pattern, this was evident. It was also full of sparkle of teermanas and the variety of abhinaya to carry conviction.

But one did not understand the need and propriety of insertion of Geethopadesha sequence during the elaboration of a Purandaradasa pada "Ee pariya sobagu" (ragamalika). In this the beauty of the Lord Vishnu is described. The depiction of Geethopadesha, according to me, did not contribute to the enrichment of the main theme. However, her freezes and statuesque poses were endearing. Helavanakatti Giriyamma's pada and tillana in khanda eka tala provided a fitting finale to her dance recital. KRV Pulikeshi (nattuvanga), Ramesh Chadaga (vocal), V.R.Chandrasekhar (mridanga) and others extended able support.

Graceful Lavanya

Little Lavanya Vijayakumar, a disciple of Guru Revathi Narasimhan stole the

hearts of the rasikas with her neat and tidy Bharatanatya recital held at ADA Rangamandira. Though at the outset, she seemed to be shaky, she could collate all her confidence and ultimately came out in flying colours. Her hardwork and the immaculate training she had had under her Guru came to the fore. The chaturashra alarippu served as a formidable basis for her evening's performance. Her sleek and supple figure accounted for her graceful angikas. Her charming face lent elegance to her abhinaya. She should learn to put them to best use. The time and experience would teach her how to do it.

The Saveri jathiswara by Tanjore Quartet served as an useful medium for her to demonstrate her strong points in nritta. Papanasham Shivan's fine krithi "Sri Valli Devasenapathe" in praise of Lord Subramaneshwara her neat abhinaya talent. The well-wrought sthanakas gave hopes of a good fare. And this hope was realised in the delineation of a pleasing varna

"Ninne neranammi naanu ra, Krishna" set to Athana raga and adi tala. In this varna the nayika pleads to Krishna to come to her and favor her with His love. She also says that she totally depends on the reunion with Him. The aduvu sequences had a greater adherence to fluency of line and length. Her movements across the stage and backward forays were lustrous. As far as the abhinaya was concerned she was at home in graphically presenting the varying moods of the nayika. With great dignity and decorum she sketched the different form of the Devi on the basis of "Sri Chakraraja Simhasaneshwari". The main theme and the sancharees suited well from the point of view of Lavanya's age and expertise when she went through a Purandaradasa pada "Pillangovia Cheluva Krishnana" (Mohana). The concluding Dhanashri tillana was packed with artistic charis, neck movements and teermanas.

Guru Revathi Narasimhan's nattuvanga was enlivening. Bharathi Venugopal (vocal), Chitra (Veena), Jayaram (flute), Gurumurthy (mridanga) and Prasanna Kumar (morsing and khanjira) were the other members of the musical ensemble. K. Subramanya Sastry did the compering.

T.S.Krishnamurthy dazzles

Noopura, the school of dance led by veteran Guru Lalitha

Srinivasan is now celebrating its silver jubilee year by holding monthly programmes of besides dance, music, drama etc at different venues of the city of Bangalore. The 10th programmes in the above series were held at Khimcha auditorium, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavana last week. A Carnatic violin solo recital by T.S.Krishnamurthy and Bharatanatya duet by the dancer-couple Prashanth Sastry and Sunitha Sastry, the old-students of Noopura, who are now settled in Chennai.

The violin solo recital by T.S. Krishnamurthy reflected only the state of his mind and indicative of his caliber and competence. I am always for the creation of beauty and rasa and demand of any specimen of music to portray sincere, deep felt emotion and feelings. It should be noted that not infrequently melodic beauty also manifests itself in the form of righteous, unalloyed, symmetrical and taut organisation of musical material and technique. Krishnamurthy's violin play vouched for the above observations.

With three-man percussionists—T.S.Chandra sekhar (mridanga), Shivu (tabla) and M.A. Krishna murthy (ghata), enriching the flow of music with their appropriate supportive role, Krishnamurthy rendered a rare krithi in Abhogi on "Sri

Mahaganapathe" with ragalapana and swaras. "Bantu reethi" by Thyagaraja in Hamsanada raga had the ornamentation of a short raga-prelude and crisp kalpana swaras. There was a more felicitous manipulation of his technique in the detailed delineation of Kambhoji for an old-time favourite krithi "Marakathavalli". He seemed to lose himself in the aura and atmosphere of raga Kambhoji.

Purandaradasa's "Aadaddella olithe aayitu" (Poorvikalyani) glowed with lyrical intensity. Mani Iyer's popular English note kept up the lively tempo of the recital. Another notable point of the recital was the confident and impressive play on the second violin by Krishna murthy's disciple Deepak, who is in his early teens. He seemed to be very promising.

Sastrys shine

Prashantha Sastry and Sunitha Sastry gave a creditable account of themselves in the presentation of a keerthane "Swaminathane". The nritha, nrithya and abhinaya were dealt with as they should be in the rendition of the Nattakuranji varna by Papanasham Shivan. Ably aided by Prabhavathi Sastry (nattuvanga), Rajasekhar (vocal), Somanna (violin), Ashwathanarayana (flute) and Purushottam (mridanga), the

Sastry
demon-
strated
a good
knick of
things.



M. Bharadwaj page

35th music conference:

The 35th music conference of the Bangalore Gayana Samaja was successfully held at its auditorium last week. The president of the conference and veteran vocalist Neela Ramgopal presented the first concert of the conference. Neela is known for her wide repertoire, unsullied scholarship and simple yet comprehensive technique. The concert under review was marked by these features. Usefully accompanied by Subhashini Sridhar (vocal support), M.A. Krishna swamy (violin), A. Kumar (mridanga) and the seasoned and fine ghata player Sukanya Ramgopal.

She launched her recital with a neat Behag varna sung in a medium pace. The musical ambience was soon set with her singing of Papanasham Shivan's krithi 'Muladhara' in Hamsadhwani raga. This was appended with a short swaravinyasa. Thyagaraja's majestic krithi 'Kaarubaaru' in Mukhari raga was sung in an

impressive vilamba laya. In the Hindola raga elongation Neela surveyed the nook and corner of the raga with her unfathomable manodharma. GNB's Devi-krithi 'Saamagaanalole' touched the inner chords of the rasikas. Veena Kuppaiyer's 'Koniyaadina' in Kambhoji was pleasing. I was overwhelmed with her choice of presenting two rarely heard melakartha ragas. It was also in tune with the theme of the music conference with dealt with melakartha ragas in the morning academic sessions. The first melakartha raga was Gangeyabhushini (33rd mela). She never paraded her faultless hidden grammar but gave us the fruits of it. This was further enriched by her when she sang a Purandaradasa pada 'Sulabha poojeya' in khanda chapu tala.

Another mark of distinction of her concert was the presentation of the 47th mela kartha raga Swarnangi. A fair amount of time was earmarked for the raga, tana and pallavi session. Raga and tana had an admirable break up and it left an indelible mark in the minds of the audience. The pallavi "Kamalasini Sundari Swarnangini Karunakari katakshi" was set to khanda tripata tala. Trikala singing and ragamalika swaraprastara

comprising Neelambari, Sriranjini and Mohana Kalyani ragas vouched for the wholesomeness of the pallavi rendition. Earlier, she had sung an interesting Subramanya Bharati work 'Suttumvizhi' in Rathipathipriya raga.

Krishna's singing marred by mannerisms

On the second evening of the conference young singer T.M. Krishna regaled the rasikas with his radiant renditions. His process of elaboration and enlargement of the main body of the ragas within the framework set by convention and tradition was undoubtedly rewarding. He swooped up as Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan used to like a hawk freed at last to perch upon a swara an octave higher. He displayed fast runs of swaras in effortless spreading out of the swaras, weaving patterns in and out. The concert was lively in a dramatic spurt of precise tones, showering out dazzling cascades of patterned phrases so clear that if even one or two anuswaras or subtle gamakas were a shade missed/overdone when unintended the rasikas could know the effect that jarred the ear.

Beautiful, artistic, technique-oriented and most of the times aesthetically-approvable patterns of musical phrases floated out of his larynx, eddying, descend-

ing in space, spiralling upwards again, then twirling downwards, always followed by the echoing violin play by Dr. Mysore Manjunath repeating every inflection and embellishment. The melody in staggered tiers was well reinforced by the veteran mridangist Vellore Ramabhadran and a confidant and skillful young ghata accompanist Giridhar Udupa.

All these were really good. But in my opinion, the concert was marred by too much of mannerisms. Those facial distortions, movements of the hands and fingers weaving some patterns in the air, many a time even the movement of the torso et al, were nothing but an eyesore. To put it in a nutshell, there were at least more than half of 25 Gaayaka Doshaas enumerated in the theory of Carnatic music. The young and talented vocalist Krishna has to go a long way in this sacred field of music. Sooner the better that he eschews these unwanted and unnecessary mannerisms on stage.

The start of the concert was startling. Thyagaraja's majestic Shankarabharana krithi 'Enduku peddala' found the first place on his agenda. He laid a formidable foundation to his recital by following it by a pleasing 'Samaja varada' in Shuddha Saveri raga. Apt to the day of his performance, he saluted the Lord Chandra on the basis of

Dikshitar's Navagraha krithi 'Chandram bhaja manasa'. 'Harinendu' was crisp. The exposition of Kalyani in detail was like greased lightning with phrases traversing the octaves (including the taara shadja). There were sancharas which had unhurried ponderosity of a temple elephant and culminated in a facile middle speed. The krithi 'Kamalambam bhaje re manasa' was adorned with expanded kalpanaswaras. Those swaras set around 'ni', in particular, were really an audio treat! He sang yet another Devi krithi 'Devi brova' by Shyama Sastry set to Chintamani raga. Many an eyebrow raised when he announced the name of Janaranjini for raga, tana and pallavi. He methodically and melodically went through the paces of the pallavi line 'Paahimaam Sri Raja Rajeshwari Shankari'. This was topped by a garland of swaras with Shahana, Reetigowla and Simhavahini ragas strung together into it. It was a class one recital. ◆

A Novel Concert by T.N. Seshagopalan (By Harini Raghavan)

Indiranagar Sangeetha Sabha had arranged the concert of top ranking vocalist Madurai T.N.Seshagopalan in their monthly music programme. Despite his frequent concerts in Bangalore each concert is a fresh treat to the rasikas here due to the novelty in the theme and structure of his concerts.

It appeared that the artiste wished to dedicate the concert to Lord Venkateshwara, that being a Saturday. Opening the concert with the Navaragamalika Varnam "Valachi", he decorated the charana 'Pada saroja' with Navaragamalika swaras, giving a delightful start to the concert with compositions like 'Etulabrothuvo' (Chakravaka), 'Alagalallada' (Madhyamavathi), 'Venkateshaila Vihara' (Hamir Kalyani) and 'Manasunilpa' (Abhogi). A detailed delineation of Pantuvarali for a piece from 'Kamba Ramayanam' "Kai Vannam Angu Kanden" fol-

OBITUARY: Very well known percussionist, strict disciplinarian and a visionary organiser Sangeetha Kalarathna **Bangalore K. Venkataram**'s sudden demise has caused an irreparable loss to the field of music in general and to the cause of percussion instruments and instrumentalists in particular. The 69-year old BKV was a beehive of activity. Straight spoken and always a keeper of time, he strove hard in getting due recognition to the laya vadyas and laya vadyakaaraas. With this purpose he founded the Percussive Arts Centre and besides holding annual Taalavaadyotsavas he has several publications pertaining to laya. May his soul rest in peace. ◆

“Kai Vannam Angu Kanden” followed by a neraval and rich swara prasthara occupied prime of place in the concert and proved how such literary pieces could very well be presented on the concert stage. ‘Kanakanaruchi’ (Varali) proceeded by another most appropriate passage from Kamba Ramayanam was brilliant. The main piece, magnificent Kedaragaula was highly evocative and sublime. ‘Saraguna Palimpa’ was filled with rasa and bhava and

complex sangathis, with various combinations woven around MGS RMP left the percussionists and audience spellbound. It was much beyond the understanding of the common listener.

Several Tamil compositions found place in the concert. A Ragamalika shloka followed by a Telugu composition of Madurai G.S.Mani in Raga Mishra Shivan jani was interesting. He rounded off the concert by paying obei-

sance to Lord Venkateshwara. Divya Prabha ndam followed by Tirupathi Venkataramana of Purandara dasa. Nagai Sriram, a young violinist from Chennai was sharp and highly enthusiastic in his following. Thanjavur Muruga Bhupathi’s vibrant Mridanga and young Sundar Kumar’s supportive Khanjira added colour to the concert. The percussionists together presented a remarkable Tani Avarthana.u

Elected for Nadajyothi Awards: The following have been elected for Nadajyothi awards:- Prof. R.Vishweshwaran (veena), C.K.Tara (vocal), M.A.Jayaramarao (Gamaka) and Srikantham Nagendra Sastry for “Nada Jyothi Puraskara”. These awards will be presented on 23-1-2004 during the 39th Nadajyothi Sangeetotsava to be held under the aegis of Nadajyothi Sri Thyagaraja Bhajana Sabha.

Concert-competitions: The above Sabha in association with Ananya is holding “Yuvotsava-2004” featuring young musicians at the Ananya auditorium from 2-1-04 to 4-1-04. Interested participants in the age group of 15-20 years are requested to contact Varuni Jayateerthachar with their bio-data (ph.080-3311360) on or before 30-11-2003.

State level Hindusthani and Karnatak music competitions are being held under the aegis of Sangeetha Bharathi Trust, Kundapura with attractive prizes. Last date to submit applications: 30-11-2003. Contact- A.Vaikuntha Hebbar (576201 (08254-7202070) and K.Sreedhara Kamath (576222 (08254-761122).

Ragashree Sammelanotsava will be held under the auspices of D.Subbaramaiah Fine Arts Trust from 28-11-03 to 30-11-03 at Dr.H.N.Kalakshetra, Jayangar. Contact: 080-6646089.

Fourth anniversary of “Hamsadhwani”, led by ace singer M.S.Sheela and her husband Rangaswamy was celebrated at the Ananya auditorium for three days. H.Kamalanath inaugurated the festival. Musicologist S.Krishnamurthy released the audio cassette “Venkataramanane baaro” brought out by M.S.Sheela. Chandankumar (flute), Charulatha Ramanujam (violin), Cheluvvaraju (mridanga) and R.A.Rajagopal (ghata) on the first day, Neela Ramgopal (vocal) and party on the second day and group rendering of Devi-krithis and group Lalitha Sahasranama led by Sheela on the third day were the highlights of the festival.

GURUVANDANA by the disciples of veteran vocalist Belakavadi Rangaswamy Iyengar on the occasion of his 80th birthday will be held on 22-11-03 at 6.30 p.m. at Ananya Sabhangana.

*The Legend of the Legendary***DR. SEMMANGUDI R. SRINIVASA IYER****By Dr. M. Surya Prasad**

When I met the nonagenarian vocalist-phenomenon of Karnatak music Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer during his visit to Bangalore some two years ago to receive the honour from the Bangalore Gayana Samaja I was overwhelmed with his wit, humour and remarkable memory power. The Grand Old Man of Karnatak Music shared with me about his ideas and observations on several aspects of classical music. His music represented the glorious musical history of our system. It was exhilarating and uplifting music that took the listener beyond the stresses and strains of the mundane life. A fine mix of the exuberance and vitality mixed with the sincere bhakti of his presentation could be enjoyed in his Sanskrit shloka renditions. His brilliant exposition of Kharaharapriya raga led people to refer to him as 'Kharaharapriya Srinivasa Iyer'. Semmangudi rose to fame like a meteor. In the late 1930s he was considered as one of the top-vocalists of the period and in 1947 the Music Academy of Madras conferred on him the prestigious title Sangeetha Kalanidhi. Aged 39 he was the youngest artiste to receive the award. Till his death last month he was the oldest surviving Sangeetha Kalanidhi. Though physically he seemed to be tired, he was mentally agile. His humorous yet useful words in Tamil were also inspiring. As a tribute to the bereaved fatherly-figure (Pithamaha) of Karnatak music the essence of the discussion I had with him is presented here.

About his early days: As a young boy living in my village Semmangudi he was drawn to the bhajans which were held in connection with the Margazhai festival. He would go behind the singers. Times have, however, changed from his days. He was of a high opinion about the quality of rasikas of his time. Well-informed, appreciative of music and only good music lovers attended the concerts in the past. But now, he added "Karnatak classical music seems to have moved from the villages to the cities. It is a happy thing to see a lot of women singing Karnatak music so well. The greatness of music lies in the fact that it has crossed the oceans too. Hence I feel that music will never die. During my times so many sabhas or cutheris were not there. Now, you have a sabha in every street. It is true that through the sabhas, music has reached a large number of people. But, at the same time, it is saddening to see music being commercialised to unlimited extents. In my days, a sabha cutcheri spanned for four hours. The serious music lovers would listen to the cutcheris with all seriousness. I find a change as far as the audience applause is concerned. The artistes used to be applauded an outstanding rendition of a raga or pallavi. The rasikas just nodded their head and if they were fully impressed, they would exclaim, 'Aaahh!'. But the present day audience keeps applauding all the time.

About the Gurukula Vaasa and computers: You don't need a Gurukula Vaasa these days. I came to know that that many people learn sangeetha with the help of computers. I neither understand all that and nor belong to this machine-age. We learnt directly from our gurus and we were expected to sing the way our gurus taught us. Even we were beaten if we made a mistake in the shruthi. Now I feel that classical music has lost a little bit of its seriousness.

His tips to the budding artistes were: Follow the footsteps of the Guru but do not blindly imitate him. Use the microphone as a telescope and not as a microscope in other words always maintain a distance between the mouth and the mike.. Do not venture to compose your own and new songs when you have abundant of them in the form of Thyagaraja, Dikshithar. Shyama Sastri, Swati Tirunal krithis. Learn music from a guru directly in person. Do not depend and learn from

audio-video cassettes.

The legend: Srinivasa Iyer was the third son born to Radhakrishna Iyer and Dharmasamvardhini Ammal. Born on 25th July 1908, he grew up in the village of Semmangudi which is in the cradle of Karnatak music, Tanjavur District, South India. Due to Srinivasa Iyer, this little village is now world renowned. From the age of 5, the young lad showed an aptitude and interest in music. Dharmasamvardhini's brother Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer (one of the first successful Karnatak musicians who played violin) and her nephew Narayanaswami Iyer convinced Radhakrishna Iyer to decide that music would be a good career for his son. Hence from the age of nine, Semmangudi started receiving music training. Semmangudi had the opportunity to learn music under distinguished musical stalwarts—with his cousin-brother and a violinist Semmangudi Narayanaswami Iyer, the famous gottuvadya artiste Sakharama Rao and also vocalist Umayalpuram Swaminatha Iyer. Finally, Semmangudi had training from the ace vocalist Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer. He had the rare opportunity of providing vocal support to Viswanatha Iyer in several concerts. He also listened to concerts by eminent musicians such as Ariyakudi, Chembai, Naina Pillai and Flute Sanjeeva Rao. He was also influenced by the quality nagaswara music of T. N. Rajaratnam Pillai and Karukurichi Arunachalam.

He had served in various capacities. In 1939 he was made Asthana Vidwan of the Travancore Palace in Kerala and joined the Swati Tirunal Music Academy in Trivandrum in 1941. He soon became the Principal of this institution and was there till 1963. From the period 1956-59 he served as Chief Producer of Karnatak Music. At the Swati Tirunal Academy Semmangudi, along with Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar and others were given the task to set music to the Maharaja's lyrics. He has brought out two publications which give the notation to over 200 of Swati Tirunal's compositions. Furthermore, he tried to include at least two Swati Tirunal krithis in each of his concerts. Deva Deva (Mayamalavagowla), Pankajalochana (Kalyani) and Bhavayami Raghuramam (Ragamalika) are just some of the compositions that were both tuned and popularised by him. The latter, an epitome of Ramayana, was originally entirely set in Saveri raga but Semmangudi transformed it into a ragamalika (beginning with Saveri) and added a scintillating set of chittai-swaras.

Semmangudi had a wide repertoire of more than 800 compositions. Though he chose to commence with a krithi in Mayamalavagowla or a Ganapathi krithi he used sing varna in his concerts on a few occasions. His Kalyani, Kapi, Sriranjani, Kambhoji and Kharaharapriya, Amba Kamakshi (Bhairavi), Marubalka (Sri Ranjani), Chetasree (Dwijawanti), Biranabrova (Kalyani), Chakkani Raja and Rama Nee Samanamevaru (both Kharaharapriya) remain memorable. Towards the end of his concert one would eagerly await his emotion-filled singing of ragamalika viruthams, the Kapi javali, Parulannamata and Sivan's Sharavanabhava (Shanmukhapriya).

Srinivasa Iyer has eminent disciples to his credit. Best-known among them are the eminent violinist T. N. Krishnan, Yesudas, T.M. Thiagarajan, P.S. Narayanaswamy. And M.S. Subbulakshmi, polished her songs under Srinivasa Iyer's guidance.

Awards: 1944 Rajya Seva Nirata from the Maharaja of Travancore, 1947 Sangita Kalanidhi from the Music Academy Chennai, 1953 Rashtrapati Award from the President of India, 1957 Raga Ratnakara from the Sringeri Sharada Peetam, 1969 Isai Perarignar from the Tamil Isai Sangam, 1969 Padma Bhushan from the Govt. of India, 1974 Sangita Kalasikhamani from the Indian Fine Arts Society, 1976 Sangita Kalaratna from the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, 1977 Fellowship of Sangita Natak Academy, 1979 Doctorate from the Kerala University, 1981 Kalidas Samman from the MP Govt., 1990, Padma Vibhushan from the Govt. of India and so on. ◆

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S.K. Lakshminarayana (Babu) Page

..L.E.I.S.U.R.E.

PHOTO QUIZ

Name this great artiste?



SOLUTION TO PHOTO QUIZ

Sarangi Ghulam Sabir Khan

QUIZ OF FINE ARTS....14

1. Name the Dasha Praanaas of tala?
2. What Daru Veena?
3. What is opposite of it?
4. What are Dasara Padagalu?
5. Name the Janaka raga of Bhinna Shadja?
6. Give its scale?
7. Name the wellknown Thyagaraja krithi in it?
8. What is Dashavatara Ashtapadi?
9. Name the composer of Dashavatara Divyanama keerthana?
10. What is its speciality?

SOLUTION TO QUIZ...14

1. The ten elements of musical time: Kaala, Maarga, Kriya, Anga, Graha, Jaathi, Kala, Laya, Yati and Prastaara.
2. Wooden Veena.
3. Gaathra veena (the singing voice of man).
4. The name given to the devotional songs (padas) of Haridasas of Karnataka.
5. Dhenuka (9th mela).
6. s r g r p m p n s--s d p m g r s.
7. "Sariyaaraalona".
8. The first Ashtapadi in the Geetha Govinda of Jayadeva wherein each stanza deals with one of the incarnations of Vishnu.
9. "Dina janavana" of Thyagaraja in Bhoopala raga.
10. It treats the ten avatars of Vishnu including Buddha among them.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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u The Sabhas, Organisations, Institutions and organisers are hereby requested to send the details of their forthcoming activities/programmes as also the events held to get them enlisted in the current issue of **GUNAGRAHI** by post and/or through e-mail on or before 8th of every month.



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